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News Releases and other News Material

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News Releases-

Release No. 0278.94

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SALMONELLA DETECTION RESEARCH AT USDA LAB PICKED AS TOP PROJECT

WASHINGTON, April 4 -- Electrical current could be a faster tipoff to the presence of food-poisoning salmonella bacteria during poultry processing in a new test under development by U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists.

Essex E. Finney, acting administrator for USDA's Agricultural Research Service, said chemist Jeffrey D. Brewster's salmonella test proposal was ranked first among more than 300 proposals submitted for possible funding in the agency's Research Associate Program. Brewster works at the ARS Eastern Regional Research Center at Philadelphia.

Forty-nine of the proposals were approved for funding for one or two years in the program, now in its 14th year. Finney said the program is designed to give recent recipients of doctoral degrees in science and engineering the opportunity to work and train under the direction of experienced ARS scientists in high-priority research areas such as food safety.

Finney said Brewster's test will be designed to detect salmonella in the water used to wash poultry carcasses during processing. Present methods to detect salmonella take about 24 hours. Brewster's goal is to detect the microbes within minutes, improving the ability of processors and inspectors to ensure contaminated products do not reach the marketplace.

To design the test, Brewster and colleagues will adapt technology developed in Israel and the United Kingdom. There, researchers recently demonstrated that small numbers of staphylococcus bacteria can be detected in milk and water samples with electrochemical immunosensors.

In a three-step process, the new salmonella test will use electrical current to measure how many salmonella cells may be present in a sample of poultry processing wash water. First, a carbon-felt electrode coated with antibodies against salmonella is stirred with a wash water sample. This causes salmonella cells present to bind to the electrode.

Next, the electrode is rinsed and placed in a solution containing modified salmonella antibodies that are linked to an enzyme called alkaline phosphatase. Thousands of enzyme molecules bind to each of the electrode-bound bacteria to form an electrode-salmonella-enzyme "sandwich." The electrode is rinsed again.

Finally, the electrode is connected to a sensitive electrochemical detector and placed in a solution of p-aminophenyl phosphate. The enzyme converts this chemical to p-aminophenol, which reacts at the electrode to produce an electrical current proportional to the number of bacteria in the original wash water sample.

When perfected, the technique may be extended to other pathogens, using additional combinations of antibodies and enzymes.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Contact for details Jeffrey D. Brewster, Eastern Regional Research Center, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, Philadelphia, Pa. 19118. Telephone: (215) 233-6447.

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Release No. 0280.94

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USDA ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR ADDITIONAL LEVEE REPAIRS IN FLOODED MIDWESTERN STATES

WASHINGTON, April 4--Farmers in the midwestern states affected by the 1993 floods can now receive additional assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in repairing main stem levees protecting agricultural land, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy announced today.

"Due to floods and excessive rainfall, Midwest farmers have suffered one of the worst disasters in the history of our country," Espy said. "We at the U.S. Department of Agriculture understand the impact this has had on producers and we want to continue to help in every way possible."

The additional repairs will be paid for through a \$50 million appropriation by Congress. So far, USDA has committed over \$6 million to levee repair through a previous appropriation.

USDA has already repaired 238 levees damaged by the 1993 floods. Missouri leads the list with 102 and South Dakota is second with 58 repaired levees. Another 91 levees are now under contract for repair and are expected to be completed by this summer. A list of these levees can be obtained at the SCS national headquarters in Washington, D.C.; telephone (202) 720-3422.

In addition, USDA has already provided more than \$2.5 billion in assistance to the Midwest as a result of the 1993 floods. This assistance has come in the form of crop disaster payments, crop insurance, indemnity payments, emergency food stamps and commodities for group feeding, loans, and emergency watershed protection projects.

USDA's Soil Conservation Service will administer the levee repair program. "We're helping agricultural landowners in a number of ways," said Paul W. Johnson, chief of SCS. "In addition to levee repair, we've just announced a second sign up for the Emergency Wetlands Reserve Program to help many landowners return flood-damaged cropland to wetlands."

To be eligible for levee repair the following criteria must be met:

- The primary cause of the levee damage was the result of the Midwest floods of 1993;
- The levee sponsor/owner is not currently participating in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers levee repair program, and agrees to participate in the program upon completion of the work;
- The levee sponsor/owner must provide 25 percent of the cost of the work, of which 5 percent shall be paid in cash;
- Levee repairs will be economically and environmentally sound;
- Levee owners with systems that currently meet or nearly meet Corps of Engineers maintenance standards will receive preference for levee repair;
- A project agreement to repair the levee must be executed prior to Dec. 31, 1994.

This assistance is available in nine midwestern states -- Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Levee sponsors should contact local SCS offices for more information.



Release No. 0282.94
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USDA PROPOSES REVISED VOLUNTARY SHELL EGG GRADING REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, April 5 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has proposed revised regulations and standards for shell eggs.

Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said these proposals will clarify and update the voluntary shell egg grading regulations. The proposal reflects new technology, current production and processing practices and statutory requirements.

The proposed revisions would:

- define washed ungraded eggs;
- clarify the definition of a quality assurance inspector;
- add age and disability as types of prohibited discrimination in the licensing of graders and in the conduct of all grading services;
- clarify the type of facilities and equipment to be supplied to a grader;
- clarify the method by which cartons of eggs are to be identified;
- update grading room requirements;
- harmonize the individual shell egg quality standards for B quality in U.S. Nest-Run grades with the U.S. Standards for Quality of Individual Shell Eggs for B quality; and
- delete the wholesale shell egg grades and weight classes.

The grading of shell eggs is an AMS voluntary program, provided under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended, and is offered on a fee-for-service basis to assist in the orderly marketing of shell eggs.

This proposal was published as a proposed rule in today's Federal Register for April 5. Comments must be received on or before June 6 in the office of Janice L. Lockard, Chief, Standardization Branch, Poultry Division, AMS, USDA, Room 3944-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456, (202) 720-3506.



Release No. 0283.94
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USDA TO CONTINUE COTTON MODULE AVERAGING PROGRAM

WASHINGTON, April 5 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has decided to continue module averaging, on a voluntary basis, under its cotton classification program.

Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said under this procedure, quality factor determinations for each bale in a module or trailer would be averaged. The average value for each factor would be assigned to each bale in the module or trailer.

"Three successful years of module averaging as a voluntary program demonstrated that the procedure significantly improved the reliability of quality determinations for all quality factors," Hatamiya said. After reaching that conclusion, AMS proposed the implementation of this approach to assigning quality measurements.

AMS reached its decision to continue the program on a voluntary basis after reviewing the written comments received on its proposal. An analysis of the comments showed that there is unanimous support for module averaging as a voluntary program.

However, a majority of respondents were not in favor of a mandatory program for 1994, said Hatamiya. AMS had earlier proposed a mandatory program, as amendments to the cotton classing regulations, in a proposed rule published in the Federal Register dated Jan. 31, 1994. A notice withdrawing those earlier proposed amendments to the cotton classing regulations was published in today's Federal Register for April 5.

Copies and additional information are available from Craig Shackelford, Cotton Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2641-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090; tel. (202) 720-2259.



Release No. 0286.94
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FOREST SERVICE PURSUING REINVENTION

WASHINGTON, April 6 -- The U.S. Forest Service today will hold the first in a series of town hall meetings on reinventing the agency, announced Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy.

"The Forest Service is undertaking an objective, comprehensive look at all aspects of its work, with a primary focus on providing better customer service," said Espy. "I am committed to ensuring that the Forest Service reaches this goal in the most efficient manner possible."

The Forest Service is responsible for the management of over 191 million acres of national forest and grasslands throughout the country. The agency also conducts extensive research in numerous aspects of natural resource management, as well as encouraging and assisting private land owners in the management of their lands.

"Meeting the needs and expectations of the many people the agency serves as well as a continuing appreciation of the scientific complexity of managing our natural resources has made it clear that the Forest Service must make the changes necessary to fulfill these new expectations and

realities," said Espy. "This reinvention effort will position the Forest Service to be the premier natural resource agency in the world, well into the 21st Century."

The Forest Service will be conducting a number of public forums to ensure that people inside and outside the agency will have an opportunity to comment on how the Forest Service should be redesigned to meet customer needs and improve its efficiency.

"We are at an important juncture in the agency's history, and it is critical that all customers of the Forest Service have a voice in how the agency should be shaped," said Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment James Lyons. "Among our efforts, the Forest Service will be conducting town hall meetings and customer surveys, to attempt to accurately assess the direction in which the American people want the agency to go."

A Forest Service team has been working to gather and analyze comments and ideas on how the agency should be shaped. They will develop a draft proposal from that information to meet the expectations of the public.

"I have told this team that there are no sacred cows when it comes to shaping the Forest Service of the future," said Jack Ward Thomas, chief of the Forest Service. "I am personally committed to ensuring that necessary changes will be made and made quickly".

Town hall meetings are scheduled for:

Sacramento, Calif.	April 6
Seattle, Wash.	April 13
Asheville, N.C.	April 16
Boise, Idaho	April 23
Phoenix, Ariz.	April 26
Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn.	April 30
Burlington, Vt.	May 6
Washington, D.C.	May 11

A draft report on the findings of the Forest Service team is anticipated for release early this summer.

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Release No. 0287.94
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USDA TO REVISE PUBLICATION ON "IMPS" FOR FRESH VEAL AND CALF

WASHINGTON, April 7 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comments on a proposed revision of its guidelines publication, "Institutional Meat Purchase Specifications (IMPS) for Fresh Veal and Calf, Series -- 300."

The proposed document features new items and modifications to item description requirements. It would replace the current publication, dated July 1975.

"We believe the proposed changes in the new document are in the best interest of large volume purchasers of fresh veal products, and we're seeking comments from representatives of both the producing and purchasing segments of the meat industry," said Barry Carpenter, director of the Livestock and Seed Division with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

The IMPS are used by commercial meat buyers and institutions that buy large quantities of meat. The documents include three sets of specifications. One set, "General Requirements," provides guidelines for refrigeration and packaging. A second set is a group of eight code-referenced descriptions of raw, cooked and cured meats; variety meats; and sausage products. "Series 300" is within the second set. The third set, "Quality Assurance Provisions," has guidelines to determine acceptability of IMPS items on a sampling basis.

The comment period will be open until May 31. Copies of the proposed document are available from Steve Olson, Livestock and Seed Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2603-S, P.O. Box 96456. Washington, DC 20090-6456, telephone 202-720-4486.

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Release No. 0289.94

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USDA REVISES PUBLIC LAW 480 TITLE I ALLOCATIONS FOR FISCAL 1994

WASHINGTON, April 7--The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced revised country and commodity allocations for the third quarter of fiscal 1994 under Title I of the Food for Peace Program and the Food for Progress Program funded under Title I appropriations.

Phil Mackie, acting general sales manager for USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), said \$327.5 million has been allocated for commodity loans and grants. The remaining unallocated funds for the purchase of commodities will be limited by budget authority funds totaling \$53.2 million. According to Mackie, these allocations do not necessarily represent final U.S. commitments with participating governments, because situations can develop that cause a change in country and commodity allocations during the fiscal year.

Since the January announcement of fiscal year 1994 allocations (USDA news release 0030.94), allocations have been added for Angola, Congo, Ukraine and Slovak Republic; and funds previously allocated to Bulgaria, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Latvia, and Pakistan have been returned to the unallocated reserve. Title I funds have been designated for transfer to the Food for Progress Program for grants to the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

Title I of the Food for Peace Program (Public Law 480) is a concessional sales program to promote exports of agricultural commodities from the United States and to foster broad-based sustainable development in recipient countries. The program provides export financing over payment periods of 10 to 30 years, grace periods on payments of principal of up to seven years, and low interest rates.

Countries eligible for the Title I Program are those developing countries experiencing a shortage of foreign exchange earnings and having difficulty meeting all of their food needs through commercial channels. The factors that determine priorities for country allocations include food needs, potential for becoming a commercial U.S. market and improvement of food security through agricultural projects and economic measures. The allocations take into account changing economic and foreign policy situations, market development opportunities, existence of adequate storage facilities and possible disincentives to local production.

For further information contact: Mary Chambliss, FAS, USDA (202) 720-3573. The list of country and commodity allocations follows.

Third Quarter FY 1994 Public Law 480 Title I
Country and Commodity Allocations

Country	\$Mil Total	Undesig- nated	Wheat a/ (Mil \$) (-----1,000 Metric Tons-----).	Rice
Angola	5.0	--	18.9	--
Belarus	10.0	--	--	--
Congo	3.0	--	--	7.7
Costa Rica	5.0	--	33.0	--
Cote d'Ivoire	15.0	--	--	38.6
Croatia	10.0	--	--	--
Guatemala	15.0	--	97.3	--
Jamaica	20.0	--	--	28.2
Jordan	15.0	--	85.0	--
Lithuania	10.0	--	--	--
Moldova	10.0	--	--	--
Morocco	15.0	--	45.0	--
Philippines	15.0	--	--	--
Poland	5.0	--	--	--
Romania	10.0	--	--	--

Slovak Republic	10.0	--	--	--
Sri Lanka	8.0	--	45.0	--
Suriname	5.5	--	32.0	--
Turkmenistan	10.0	--	50.0	--
Ukraine	20.0	--	--	--
Yemen	10.0	--	32.4	12.9
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Total	226.5	0	438.6	87.3

Continued: P.L. 480 Title I Allocations,
3rd Quarter Fiscal 1994

Country	Feed Grains	Veg.Oil	Oilseeds/ Meal b/	Tallow	Cotton
(-----1,000 Metric Tons-----)					
Angola	--	--	--	--	--
Belarus	--	--	38.0	--	--
Congo	--	--	--	--	--
Costa Rica	--	--	--	--	--
Cote d'Ivoire	--	--	--	--	--
Croatia	--	--	--	--	26.5
Guatemala	--	--	--	--	--
Jamaica	72.0	--	--	--	--
Jordan	--	--	--	--	--
Lithuania	--	--	38.0	--	--
Moldova	36.0	--	5.6	--	--
Morocco	--	10.0	--	--	--
Philippines	--	--	62.0	--	--
Poland	--	--	--	--	14.3
Romania	--	--	38.1	--	--
Slovak Republic	--	--	42.9	--	--
Sri Lanka	--	--	--	--	--
Suriname	--	--	--	--	--
Turkmenistan	--	--	--	--	--
Ukraine	--	--	66.0	--	--
Yemen	--	--	--	--	--
Total	108.0	10.0	290.6	----	40.8

Food for Progress Program FY 1994

Country	Total (Mil \$)	Wheat (-----1,000 Metric Tons-----)	Feed Grains	Veg. Oil
Albania	15.0	39.1	4.0	6.0
Armenia	35.0	120.0	--	--
Georgia	25.0	125.0	--	--
Kyrgyzstan	16.0	60.0	--	--
Tajikistan	10.0	35.2	--	--
Total	101.0	379.3	4.0	6.0

Funding Summary (\$ Million)c/

	Financing Level	Budget Authority
Allocated Financing	327.5	270.8
Unallocated Reserve	93.2	53.2
Total Availability	420.7	324.0

a/ Category includes wheat and wheat flour. Quantity for Angola is wheat flour in metric tons, all other country allocations are wheat.

b/ Category includes oilseeds and oilseed meal. Quantities for Latvia and Romania are oilseeds, all other country allocations are oilseed meal.

c/ The funding summary helps explain revised funding procedures for federal credit programs authorized by the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990, Title XIII of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990. These procedures, known as credit reform, require that budget authority for direct credit programs such as Title I represent the subsidy cost of the program. Subsidy costs are estimated based on the repayment terms, interest subsidies, and estimated risk of defaults. The Title I budget now includes two funding limitations the \$420.7 million available for credit financing and the \$324.0 million available for budget authority to cover the estimated subsidy cost of the program. Neither limitation can be exceeded.



Release No. 0290.94
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PRODUCERS OFFER UP TO 580,725 ACRES FOR ENROLLMENT IN WETLANDS RESERVE

WASHINGTON, April 7--Farmers and ranchers in twenty states offered 580,725 acres for enrollment in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wetlands Reserve Program, more than 7 times the FY 1994 goal of 75,000 acres, according to Grant Buntrock, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS).

"This continued strong interest in the Wetlands Reserve Program shows the environmental commitment and responsibility of American farmers," Buntrock said.

Landowners in Arkansas, California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin may offer to enroll land in the wetlands reserve. Projected enrollment is about 75,000 acres for 1994 at a cost of \$66.7 million.

USDA will pay landowners easement costs for acreage accepted in the program, plus not more than 75 percent of costs for work approved to restore the land to approved wetland conditions. Enrolled acreage must be restored and kept permanently as wetlands, under the supervision of ASCS.

During the recent signup period for the program, approximately 5,709 landowners in the twenty states expressed their interest in offering 580,725 acres for enrollment.

"Clearly, this is a popular program with far-reaching environmental benefits," Buntrock said. "The whole idea is to help producers voluntarily restore to wetlands, by the year 2000, up to 975,000 acres of land now under cultivation in order to conserve soil and improve water and wildlife habitat."

During the next 6 weeks, technical experts with USDA's Soil Conservation Service and the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service will complete preliminary wetland restoration plans for the acreage offered in the signup. These plans will serve as the basis for landowners to determine whether to accept ASCS offers for enrollment in the program. ASCS offers are expected to be made before May 31.

The following table shows results of the signup by state:

	Number of Acres	Number of Producers
Arkansas	71,413.0	461
California	48,475.5	141
Illinois	24,032.0	374
Indiana	14,255.0	403
Iowa	57,439.4	1,058
Kansas	13,676.7	273
Louisiana	80,587.2	320
Minnesota	31,079.5	386
Mississippi	91,338.0	369
Missouri	27,805.3	431
Nebraska	6,543.4	146
New York	2,708.3	63
North Carolina	6,168.0	32
Oregon	15,786.3	62
South Dakota	39,816.9	506
Tennessee	11,507.8	118
Texas	8,647.8	35
Virginia	10,501.3	110
Washington	3,044.2	41
Wisconsin	22,067.0	412
National Total	580,724.6	5,709

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Release No. 0291.94
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ESPY NAMES MEMBERS TO NATIONAL HONEY NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON, April 7 -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced today seven new appointments and five reappointments to the National Honey Nominations Committee.

Members are nominated by beekeeping organizations in each state. All of the appointees will serve three-year terms beginning immediately and expiring Dec. 31, 1996.

The newly appointed members are: Jerry A. Brown, Haddam, Kan.; Glenn E. Davis, Blue Springs, Mo; Todd D. Larson, Billings, Mont.; Joann M. Olstrom, Reedsport, Ore.; Glen R. Wollman, Parker, S.D.; Donald J. Kohn, Withee, Wis; and Charles D. Hannum, Arlington, Va.

Reappointed for three-year terms are: Reg G. Wilbanks, Claxton, Ga.; Donald T. O'Neill, Baton Rouge, La.; Jacob C. DeKorne, Ellsworth, Mich.; Darl B. Stoller, Latty, Ohio; and Stephen H. Dilley, Nashville, Tenn.

The Committee's sole purpose is to nominate members and alternate members to the Honey Board. The board administers an industry-funded national research, promotion and consumer information program to increase domestic honey consumption and U.S. honey exports.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors the operations of the committee and the Honey Board.

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Release No. 0292.94
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ESPY NAMES MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES TO HONEY BOARD

WASHINGTON, April 7 -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced today the appointment of four members and alternates to the 13-member Honey Board.

Producers, handlers, importer/exporters, marketing cooperatives and the public are represented on the board. The new board members replace those with terms expiring in two of seven geographic regions, the importer/exporter category and the marketing cooperatives category.

Appointed to represent producers in Region 7 (Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia, Maryland, District of Columbia, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine) was Stephen A. Conlon, New Martinsville, W.Va. David E. Hackenberg, Lewisburg, Pa., was reappointed as alternate.

Reappointed was H. Binford Weaver, Navosota, Texas, to represent producers in Region 5 (Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama). Bobby E. Coy, Jonesboro, Ark., was appointed as alternate.

John D. McGinnis, Edgewater, Fla., will represent honey exporters and Robert H. Coyle, Clyde Hill, Wash., an importer, was appointed as alternate.

Appointed to represent marketing cooperatives was Albert B. Belliston, Heyburn, Idaho, with David B. Allibone, Sioux City, Iowa, serving as alternate.

All appointees will serve three year terms beginning April 1, 1994, and expiring March 31, 1997.

The Honey Board administers an industry-funded national research, promotion and consumer information program designed to increase domestic honey consumption and U.S. honey exports.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors operations of the Honey Board.



Release No. 0293.94
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ESPY NAMES MEMBERS TO NATIONAL POTATO PROMOTION BOARD

Washington, April 7 -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced today 15 new appointments and 13 reappointments to the National Potato Promotion Board.

Among the new appointees are the first importer members appointed to the board. The importer members are being added because imported potatoes and potato products are now assessed under the potato research and promotion plan.

Newly appointed producers are: Michael C. Etchart, Litchfield Park, Ariz.; John B. Brownell, Hooper, Colo.; Mark L. Darrington, Declo, Idaho; Randy L. Hardy, Oakley, Idaho; Ralph D. Isom, Idaho Falls, Idaho; Frank M. Jacobs, Hamer, Idaho; Larry A. Young, Lakeview, Mich.; Robert H. Reed, Bridgeton, N.J.; Annabelle J. Loveland, Bloomfield, N.M.; John C. Stowell, Savannah, N.Y.; Virgil W. Slagell, Hydro, Okla.; Tony B. Czebotar, Richland, Wash.; and John T. Schroeder, Antigo, Wis.

Newly appointed importer members are: Edward H.P. Barnhill, Milford, Mass.; and Barbara C. Roberts-Kerr, Boise, Idaho.

Reappointed are public member Linda P. Drake, St. Mathews, Calif., and the following producer members: Mark H. Jones, St. Augustine, Fla.; H. Wesley Smith, Hastings, Fla.; Dennie K. Arnold, Felt, Idaho; Kent M. Harman, Rupert, Idaho; Delon A. Huse, American Falls, Idaho; Paul P. Van Damme, Cornell, Mich.; Jerry A. Larson, Climax, Minn.; Frederick Rainville, Colebrook, N.H.; Reuben E. James, Elizabeth City, N.C.; Ron A. Ramseyer, Smithville, Ohio; Jerry J. Heilig, Moses Lake, Wash.; and Douglas D. Stetner, Quincy, Wash.

All appointments are effective immediately and end February 28, 1997.

Producer members are nominated at state and local producer meetings. Each state is entitled to at least one producer member. Additional members are allotted to states based on potato production. Importers nominate importer members, and the board nominates the public member.

Authorized under the 1971 Potato Research and Promotion Act, the Potato Board administers an industry-funded national research and promotion program to increase domestic potato consumption and U.S. potato exports.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors the operations of the board.



Release No. 0295.94
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USDA DECLARES CALIFORNIA FREE OF BRUCELLOSIS

WASHINGTON, April 7--The U.S. Department of Agriculture has declared the state of California free of brucellosis, a bacterial disease of cattle.

"We recognize the innovation and dedication required of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the state's cattle and dairy industries, and the veterinarians in private practice to develop and carry out a successful eradication strategy for their state," said Donald Luchsinger, acting deputy administrator of veterinary services in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

California had first achieved Certified-Free status in the National Cooperative Federal-State Brucellosis Eradication Program in 1969. However, the disease was reintroduced by imported replacement heifers three years later. The persistent reinfection of dairy herds in the Chino Valley area during the 1980s led to the formation of the California Brucellosis Critical Area Task Force in 1989. This task force refocused program efforts, with the help of the local dairy industry, to implement disease management and eradication techniques.

"The success of eradication strategies in California proves that our brucellosis program is capable of beating the most challenging circumstances when fortified with innovation and cooperation," Luchsinger said.

California joins 32 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in being free of brucellosis in the eradication program. Currently 17 states hold Class A status and no states are in the lower Class B or Class C status.

The eradication program uses a classification system to indicate progress in eliminating brucellosis from livestock. States reach Class-Free status when no cattle are found to be infected with brucellosis for 12 consecutive months. A Class Free state must also maintain a comprehensive testing and surveillance program at stockyards, farms, ranches and slaughterhouses that demonstrates the annual disease prevalence rate does not exceed one reactor animal per 2,000 cattle.

The upgrade of California from Class A to Class Free should save the state's cattle industry up to an estimated \$448,000 from reduced testing requirements.

This interim rule was published in the April 4 Federal Register and became effective at that time.

To submit a comment, send an original and three written copies of written comments referring to docket number 94-009-01 on or before June 3 to: Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Comments once received may be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141 South Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Persons wishing to review comments are requested to call ahead on (202) 690-2817 to facilitate entry into the comment reading room.



Release No. 0296.94
 Clarence Steinberg (202) 720-6179
 Ron Hall (202) 720-5747

USDA SEEKS COMMENTS ON PROPOSED CHANGES IN RECORDKEEPING REGULATIONS FOR FEDERALLY RESTRICTED USE PESTICIDES

WASHINGTON, April 7 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comments on proposed amendments to its regulations on records kept on the use of certain pesticides which are limited in their use by the Federal government.

Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the amendments would:

- clarify certain definitions;
- spell out in more detail how records are available to facilitate first aid and other medical treatments;
- spell out how licensed health care professionals have access to records and under what circumstances they may release that information;
- reduce the the time an applicator has to record the use of a pesticide from the present 30 days to seven;
- remove differences in provisions for recording "spot" pesticide uses and more general pesticide uses; and,
- clarify the AMS administrator's authority in penalizing second or subsequent violations of the regulations.

The regulations affect most farmers who use pesticides as well as most commercial pesticide applicators like pest control operators.

The 1990 Farm Bill -- enacted as the Food, Agriculture, Commodity and Trade Act of 1990 -- authorized the recordkeeping program.

Details of the amendments were published as a proposed rule in the April 6 Federal Register. Comments concerning these proposals should be sent by June 6 to Bonnie Poli, Docket Manager, Science Division, Pesticide Recordkeeping Branch, AMS, USDA, 8700 Centreville Road, Suite 200, Manassas, Va. 22110. Copies of the proposed rule and additional information are available at that address, tel. (703) 330-7826.



Release No. 0297.94
 Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998
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USDA SEEKS COMMENTS ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO LIME ORDER

WASHINGTON, April 8 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comments on its proposal to amend the Lime Research, Promotion and Consumer Information Order. The proposal reflects amendments Congress made late last year to the authorizing statute.

Lon Hatamiya, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the proposal would:

- revise the definition of the term "lime" in order to cover seedless rather than seeded limes;
- exempt from assessments producers, producer-handlers and importers of less than 200,000 pounds of limes per year, rather than 35,000 pounds per year;
- conduct the initial referendum no later than 30 months after assessments begin;
- reduce the size of the lime board from 11 members to 7; and
- reduce the number of producer members on the board from 7 to 3.

The proposal was published in the April 7 Federal Register. Comments, in triplicate, should be sent by May 9 to the Docket Clerk, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, Rm. 2535-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456. Copies of the proposed rule are available from Richard Schultz at the same address, telephone (202) 720-5976.

The Lime Research, Promotion and Consumer Information Order is authorized under the Lime Research, Promotion and Consumer Information Act of 1990, as amended.



DATE SET FOR 1994 USDA WORK FORCE DIVERSITY CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON, April 8 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture will hold the first Team USDA Work Force Diversity Conference at the Washington, D.C. Convention Center on Tuesday, April 12 and Wednesday, April 13.

Work force diversity is a priority to Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy. Last year, Espy issued an EEO and Civil Rights Policy statement providing USDA employees with guidelines on equality and diversity in the work force. "Change is here. No longer will we recruit, promote, and manage the way we were in the past. We must redouble our efforts to overcome the barriers that have historically kept USDA ranked near the bottom among Federal agencies on this crucial issue," he said.

The Work Force Diversity Conference is a team effort to overcome the challenges USDA is faced with in managing Work Force 2000.

The conference objectives are designed to define diversity, recognize the importance of valuing diversity as part of a larger planned change and organizational development and to explore the impacts and benefits of an increasingly diverse work force.

Other objectives will identify key issues, strategies, skills, practices, and programs for valuing and managing the diverse work force, help to understand the impact of existing and current laws concerning diversity on personnel and an organization's business practices and develop USDA-wide initiatives to implement work force diversity to include roles, responsibilities and relationships for managers.

Several workshops have been organized as part of the conference. Ten workshops on different issue areas have been organized, during which USDA employee teams will gather and analyze comments and ideas on how to develop and manage a culturally diverse work force.

"This is a tremendous challenge before us. We will need the energy, commitment and talents of every USDA employee. Everyone has to and will be treated like a valuable part of team USDA, because everyone is a valued team player at USDA," said Espy.



Program Announcements-

Release No. 0281.94
Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623
Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

USDA ANNOUNCES 1993 WOOL AND MOHAIR SUPPORT PRICE PAYMENT RATES

WASHINGTON, April 4 -- The U.S. Department of Agriculture, in accordance with the National Wool Act of 1954, as amended (Wool Act), today announced support payment rates for the 1993 marketing year for shorn wool, wool on unshorn lambs (pulled wool) and mohair. Payments will be issued in mid-April.

The shorn wool support payment rate of 300 percent, as provided by the Wool Act, is the percentage which brings the 1993 national average wool price of \$0.51 per pound up to the support price, which for the 1993 marketing year was \$2.04 per pound. Individual producer payments are calculated by multiplying their sales proceeds for shorn wool sold during the marketing year by the payment rate.

The Wool Act also provides that pulled wool (wool on unshorn lambs) shall be supported at a level comparable to the shorn wool support payment rate in order to maintain normal pulled wool marketing practices. Accordingly, the payment rate for wool on unshorn lambs will be \$6.12 per hundredweight.

The Wool Act further provides that the mohair support payment rate is the percentage needed to bring the national average price for mohair, which for the 1993 marketing year was \$0.82 per pound, up to the announced support price. Under the Wool Act, the announced support price must be at a level of not more than 15 percent above or below the percentage of parity at which shorn wool is supported. Based on the support price for shorn wool, the mohair support price for the 1993 marketing

year is \$4.738 per pound (which is 85 percent of the percentage of parity at which shorn wool is supported). For the 1993 marketing year, mohair producers will receive \$4.778 for every \$1.00 marketed or a payment rate of 477.8 percent.

In accordance with the regulations promulgated under the Wool Act, support payments for shorn wool and mohair will not be made on that portion of producers' sales proceeds which exceed, on a per-pound basis, four times the national average price, or \$2.04 per pound for wool and \$3.28 per pound for mohair.

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Release No. 0284.94

Gene Rosera (202) 720-6734

Charles Hobbs (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES, MARKETING CERTIFICATE RATES

WASHINGTON, April 5 -- Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Dallas Smith today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

--long grain whole kernels:	10.54 cents per pound
--medium grain whole kernels:	11.55 cents per pound
--short grain whole kernels:	11.40 cents per pound
--broken kernels:	5.27 cents per pound

Based upon these milled rice world market prices, loan deficiency payment rates, gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price, and marketing certificate rates are:

	Loan Gain and LDP Rate	Marketing Certificate Rate
\$/Cwt.....	
--for long grain:	\$0.13	\$0.00
--for medium grain:	\$0.00	\$0.00
--for short grain:	\$0.00	\$0.00

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made April 12, at 3 p.m. EDT.

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Release No. 0288.94

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Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206

USDA SEEKS COMMENTS ON 1995 ARP FOR WHEAT

WASHINGTON, April 7--The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking public comment on whether the acreage reduction percentage (ARP) level for the 1995 wheat crop should be 0, 5, 10 or some other level between zero and 15 percent, according to Grant Buntrock, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation. The ARP decision must be announced by June 1, he said.

CCC has provided an analysis that includes estimated planted acreage, production, domestic and export use, ending stocks, season average producer price, program participation rate and cost to the Federal government. Details appeared in the April 6 Federal Register.

Comments should be submitted by May 4. They may be FAXed to (202) 690-1346 or mailed to: Craig Jagger, Agricultural Economist, Grains Analysis Division, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), P.O. Box 2415, Room 3740-S, Washington, D.C. 20013-2415.

All comments will be available for public inspection in Room 3740-S of USDA's South Building, 14th St. and Independence Avenue, S.W., during regular business hours. A regulatory impact analysis on the 1995 wheat program may be obtained from the same address.

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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, April 7--Grant Buntrock, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price or AWP), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (leaf grade 4, micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality), and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, April 14. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, April 8 through midnight Thursday, April 14.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. Because this week's calculated AWP is equal to 130 percent of the 1993 upland cotton base quality loan rate, a further adjustment cannot be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

<u>Adjusted World Price</u>	
NE Price	81.85
Adjustments:	
Avg. U.S. spot market location	11.91
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	1.50
Avg. U.S. location	0.31
Sum of Adjustments	- 13.72
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	68.13 cents/lb.
<u>Coarse Count Adjustment</u>	
NE Price	81.85
NE Coarse Count Price	- 78.53
	3.32
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton	- 3.20
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0.12 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is above 52.35 cents per pound--the base quality loan rate for both the 1992 and 1993 marketing years--the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the loan rate, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is above the 1993-crop loan rate, loan deficiency payments are not available during this period.

The USNE price has not exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks, nor have all of the previous four AWP's been less than 130 percent of the 1993 crop year base quality loan rate. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is zero. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	For the Friday through Thursday Period Ending	AWP (Announced) As Percent of Loan Rate	USNE Price	NE Price cents/lb	User Marketing Certificate Payment Rate
1	Mar. 17, 1994	129.3	83.00	81.43	0
2	Mar. 24, 1994	129.2	82.30	81.35	0
3	Mar. 31, 1994	131.2	83.60	82.39	0
4	Apr. 7, 1994	130.1	83.08	81.85	0

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rate will be announced on Thursday, April 14, at 5 p.m.

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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 506-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-9035.
